

# **EXHIBIT 12**

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA  
GREENVILLE DIVISION  
Civil Action No. 6:19-cv-01567-JD

EDEN ROGERS, et al, )  
)  
Plaintiffs, )  
)  
v. )  
)  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF )  
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES, )  
et al., )  
)  
Defendants. )  
\_\_\_\_\_ )

Videotaped Deposition of SHARON BETTS

(Taken by Plaintiffs)

(Taken virtually)

Tuesday, June 22, 2021

Reported in Stenotype by  
Christine A. Taylor, RPR  
Registered Professional Reporter

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1 VIDEOGRAPHER:

2 Christopher Mills

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6  
7 DEPOSITION OF SHARON BETTS, a witness called  
8 on behalf of Plaintiffs, before Christine A. Taylor,  
9 Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public, in  
10 and for the State of South Carolina, taken virtually,  
11 on Tuesday, June 22, 2021, commencing at 9:09 a.m.  
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1 A. I do not know.

2 Q. I'm asking this now as your -- as a 30(b)(6)  
3 representative.

4 MR. MATTHEWS: Which topic are you relating  
5 this to?

6 MS. SCHINDEL: Topic 4.

7 MR. MATTHEWS: Benefits of foster parents?

8 MS. SCHINDEL: I'm sorry. I didn't catch  
9 that.

10 MR. MATTHEWS: Topic 4 relates to the  
11 benefits, support and services Miracle Hill provides.

12 MS. SCHINDEL: That's right.

13 MR. MATTHEWS: And this is to foster parents  
14 and a question about which churches they recruit in  
15 related to benefits provided to foster parents?

16 MS. SCHINDEL: To prospective and current  
17 foster parents, that's right.

18 MR. MATTHEWS: I'm going to object to that.  
19 It's not within the confines of that topic. She's free  
20 to answer, but I will object to it being considered a  
21 Miracle Hill response.

22 MS. SCHINDEL: I'm sorry, Mr. Matthews, for  
23 some reason you're coming in a little bit muffled.

24 MR. MATTHEWS: I'm sorry. Let me move a  
25 little bit closer. I will object to that question as

1 being outside the bounds of topic 4. She's free to  
2 answer the question, but I will object to it being  
3 considered as a response on behalf of Miracle Hill  
4 Ministries.

5 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

6 Q. Okay. So let's start with answering the  
7 question as the representative of Miracle Hill  
8 notwithstanding the objection, and then you can answer  
9 again in your individual capacity.

10 A. And the question again, please.

11 Q. So in a 30(b)(6) capacity as a representative  
12 of Miracle Hill, I'm asking has Miracle Hill ever  
13 attended a non-Protestant church for purposes of  
14 recruitment?

15 A. I do not know.

16 Q. You are not aware of a representative of  
17 Miracle Hill that has ever attended a  
18 non-Protestant church --

19 A. I am not aware.

20 Q. And now I'm asking in your individual  
21 capacity. Are you aware of whether anybody from  
22 Miracle Hill has ever conducted recruitment in a  
23 non-Protestant church?

24 A. I am not aware.

25 Q. Meaning you are not aware of anybody having

1 done so?

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. Okay. Does Miracle Hill support foster  
4 families during the application and licensing process?

5 A. Yes.

6 Q. How does Miracle Hill do that?

7 A. Miracle Hill provides all of the application  
8 paperwork. Miracle Hill has ongoing conversations and  
9 phone calls, e-mails, contact with that family.  
10 Miracle Hill submits a fire inspection request to the  
11 state fire marshal's office. Miracle Hill provides  
12 e-mail links to specific trainings that the foster  
13 parents must complete. And Miracle Hill conducts the  
14 two home study visits that I previously referenced.

15 Q. Is that the extent of the support that  
16 Miracle Hill provides to prospective foster families  
17 during the application and licensing process?

18 A. We could add things such as prayer support.  
19 We could add things if they needed a bed, dresser,  
20 things like that. They can request that to see if we  
21 have availability to help them provide that.

22 Q. Does Miracle Hill provide support to foster  
23 families after they are licensed?

24 A. Yes.

25 Q. What support do they provide?

1           A. They, again, offer prayer and encouragement.  
2 They also are required by state DSS to conduct regular  
3 ongoing visits to the foster home. Phone calls,  
4 e-mails, maintaining a family file, child file, per DSS  
5 request. They help to establish an individual service  
6 plan for the child. They give resources to community  
7 events activities, educational support, and contact  
8 with DSS case workers regarding the needs of the child.

9           Q. You said they give resources to community  
10 events activities, what does that mean?

11          A. From time to time there may be a donor who  
12 give us tickets to an event such as the Children's  
13 Museum in the upstate. We often are invited by various  
14 churches for other kinds of places like that would  
15 invite us to a -- an event that they were holding for  
16 foster families or just in general to support children.

17          Q. You said we're often invited by various  
18 churches or places like that. What other than  
19 churches are you referring to?

20          A. There might be some community type  
21 organizations, the Lion's Club, et cetera.

22          Q. And in your previous answer, you also  
23 mentioned support, that you provide educational  
24 support. What does that mean?

25          A. We have a person on our staff who does



1 research connections with the local -- specifically  
2 Greenville County School District, in helping to find  
3 resources for children that may have educational needs.  
4 It might be tutoring. It might be helping them as a  
5 foster family deals with Individual Educational Plan  
6 meeting.

7 Q. And is that sort of service required by DSS?

8 A. No.

9 Q. Do all child placing agencies provide that  
10 service?

11 A. I do not know.

12 Q. Are you aware of other child placing agencies  
13 that provide that service?

14 A. No.

15 Q. And the community events that we spoke about  
16 a few moments ago, tickets to museums or access to  
17 other community spaces, is that sort of service  
18 required by DSS?

19 A. No.

20 Q. Do all other CPAs provide that benefit?

21 A. I do not know. I do know some do.

22 Q. Which -- which do?

23 A. Personally, I'm aware of Thornwell and Connie  
24 Maxwell.

25 Q. And what are you aware of when you say --

1       what are you thinking of when you say that they  
2       provide these benefits?

3           A.   Thornwell had foster families to the  
4       Greenville Drive baseball game.   Connie Maxwell has  
5       donors who also give various items as well as tickets  
6       to events.

7           Q.   Are you aware of any other CPAs that provide  
8       similar benefits?

9           A.   Not personally.

10          Q.   We mentioned earlier in our -- in this  
11       deposition that Miracle Hill has a position known as a  
12       placement coordinator; is that right?

13          A.   I'm sorry?

14          Q.   Miracle Hill has a position known as a  
15       placement coordinator?

16          A.   Yes.

17          Q.   What is a placement coordinator?

18          A.   A placement coordinator works with the  
19       placement units of each of the regions -- regions of  
20       DSS.   They are sent universal applications from DSS and  
21       they look through those applications.   They look at our  
22       available families to see if we have a family that  
23       would be suitable and appropriate for the needs of  
24       those children.   That coordinator then discusses all of  
25       those universal applications with a supervisor and then

1 statement in their belief and in their practice.

2 Q. Right. So if they agreed with the statement  
3 in their belief and in their practice but identified  
4 as LGBTQ, Miracle Hill would work with that individual  
5 or would not?

6 A. Individually, I'm going to answer that as that  
7 is not in my scope of making that decision.

8 Q. But part of your job is handling inquiries;  
9 right?

10 A. Yes. I review --

11 Q. I'm sorry?

12 A. I review them.

13 Q. And so what would you do with an inquiry from  
14 somebody who says that they are -- identifies as LGBTQ  
15 but are not in a same-sex relationship and do not  
16 intend to enter one?

17 A. I would take it to my supervisor. I would  
18 also look it over for the sake of are they attending a  
19 Christian church, do they have -- do they have a  
20 personal -- are they following Christ on a daily basis.

21 Q. And if an individual identified as LGBTQ and  
22 followed Christ on a daily basis and was willing to  
23 sign the doctrinal statement and was not in a same-sex  
24 relationship, would that person be approved?

25 A. Speaking personally, that's a lot of ifs, and

1 I do not make those type of decisions.

2 Q. When you say "that's a lot of ifs," do you  
3 mean that you don't think that person could exist?

4 A. No, I'm not saying that.

5 Q. So if someone is willing -- identified as  
6 LGBTQ, is willing to sign the doctrinal statement,  
7 attends church, and is in a relationship -- a romantic  
8 relationship of the same sex but no sexual contact,  
9 would that person be able to work with Miracle Hill?

10 MR. MATTHEWS: I'm going to object. The  
11 witness has testified in that situation she would take  
12 it to a higher official inside Miracle Hill Ministries  
13 and she is not here to testify on topic 1.

14 MS. SCHINDEL: I'm asking in her individual  
15 capacity. And I actually think this is a slightly  
16 different question than the one --

17 MR. MATTHEWS: But you asked her what would  
18 Miracle Hill would do. And she has told you what she  
19 would do, which is take it to a higher official inside  
20 Miracle Hill. I don't mean to be difficult and  
21 argumentative, but this is going way outside the scope  
22 of what she's here for.

23 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

24 Q. All right. Let's move on for now.

25 Since 2017, how many families have been

1 turned away because of their faith or lack thereof or  
2 because they're in a same-sex relationship?

3 And I ask this as a representative of Miracle  
4 Hill. I'm sorry, I'm going to stop sharing my screen.

5 A. I do not have a specific number.

6 Q. And does Miracle Hill keep this information  
7 anywhere?

8 A. Yes. There would probably be hard copies of  
9 those inquiries, but I do not know that it would be  
10 kept in any kind of a format or report of any kind.

11 Q. So topic 9, for which you were designated,  
12 was prospective foster families who are not accepted  
13 by Miracle Hill because of their religion or lack  
14 thereof or same-sex relationship or LGBTQ status. So  
15 did you undertake any effort to ascertain how many  
16 families have been turned away because of their faith  
17 or lack thereof or because they're in a same-sex  
18 relationship?

19 A. Yes. I did look at some of those hard copies  
20 of those inquiries.

21 Q. And so how many families have been turned  
22 away on these bases?

23 A. I don't have a specific number. I will use an  
24 approximate number, 25 to 30.

25 Q. And this is 25 to 30 since 2015 -- excuse

1 me -- since 2017, or is this a different time frame?

2 A. Yes, during that -- during that time frame.

3 Q. So how many of those individuals or families  
4 that were turned away were Catholic?

5 A. As I said, I don't have the specifics, so I  
6 would say majority.

7 Q. Majority. And do majority mean more than  
8 half or does it mean most?

9 A. More than half.

10 Q. And how many were non-Christian of the  
11 remaining -- so setting apart the Catholics, how many  
12 were non-Christian?

13 A. Again, I don't have the specific numbers.

14 Q. Do you have an approximation?

15 A. Five. Five to seven.

16 Q. And then how many prospective foster parents  
17 were turned away because they were LGBTQ?

18 MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to the  
19 form of the question. If you know, you can answer.

20 THE WITNESS: So anybody who is -- did not  
21 follow Jesus, did not agree to the doctrinal statement,  
22 did not attend a Christian church would be directed to  
23 another agency, another child placing agency.

24 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

25 Q. Right. But they wouldn't be able to work

1 with Miracle Hill?

2 A. Right.

3 Q. So how many of the people that were told they  
4 could work with Miracle Hill, how many of those  
5 prospective foster parents were LGBTQ?

6 MR. MATTHEWS: Object to the form of the  
7 question. This is Steve Matthews. Are you saying how  
8 many of them were LGBTQ or how many were rejected  
9 because they were LGBTQ.

10 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

11 Q. That's a fair question. So let's start with  
12 how many were rejected because they were LGBTQ?

13 A. I don't know. No more than one.

14 Q. No more than one?

15 MR. MATTHEWS: I believe you all may have  
16 misheard each other. You may want to ask her to repeat  
17 that answer.

18 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

19 Q. How many of the families that were turned  
20 away from working with Miracle Hill as the prospective  
21 foster parents, how many of those individuals or  
22 families were turned away because they were LGBTQ?

23 A. I don't recall that -- not just for that, no  
24 not -- not for that.

25 Q. Miracle Hill has never turned away a foster

1 family because they were LGBTQ?

2 A. I personally am not aware of that. And so it  
3 may have been a discussion higher than me, but I don't  
4 have knowledge of that.

5 Q. But you testified earlier that a person who  
6 is LGBTQ would not be able to work with Miracle Hill  
7 under the tenets of the doctrinal statement; is that  
8 right?

9 MR. COLEMAN: Object to form of the question.  
10 Misstates prior testimony.

11 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

12 Q. Sorry. When -- you still have to answer the  
13 question.

14 A. I'm sorry. The question again.

15 Q. When -- as I understood your testimony  
16 earlier, you said that if somebody -- that somebody  
17 who is LGBTQ would not comply -- comport with Miracle  
18 Hill's doctrinal statement would not be able to work  
19 with Miracle Hill; is that right?

20 MR. COLEMAN: Same objection.

21 THE WITNESS: The three things I mentioned  
22 before, if they were following Christ, if they agreed  
23 to the doctrinal statement, and they attended a  
24 Christian church.

25 BY MS. SCHINDEL:



1 Q. Right. Would somebody who is in a same-sex  
2 relationship be able to work with Miracle Hill as a  
3 prospective foster parent?

4 A. I keep going back to the three things that are  
5 required. Following Christ, agreeing and practicing --  
6 belief and practice of the doctrinal statement, and  
7 attending a Christian church.

8 Q. I'm going to insist that you answer the  
9 question, which is: Would somebody who's in a  
10 same-sex relationship be able to work with Miracle  
11 Hill as a prospective foster parent?

12 MR. MATTHEWS: I'm going to object to the  
13 form. Are you asking would they be able to or would  
14 Miracle Hill be willing to accept them? I just want to  
15 make sure that the question is clear. Is it -- would  
16 the couple be willing to or would Miracle Hill be  
17 willing to? And if it's the latter, I'm going to  
18 restate my earlier objection that that's outside the  
19 scope of this witness's 30(b)(6) testimony.

20 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

21 Q. Let's try it this way. Before a few minutes  
22 ago I was asking how many individuals were turned away  
23 because they were LGBTQ. So let me ask this: How  
24 many individuals were turned away as prospective  
25 foster parents, how many of those were LGBTQ?

1 A. I only saw four.

2 Q. Four.

3 A. That inquired.

4 Q. And has Miracle Hill ever worked with someone  
5 who is LGBTQ?

6 A. No.

7 Q. And is a person who is LGBTQ compliant --  
8 would such a person be able to comply with the  
9 doctrinal statement?

10 MR. MATTHEWS: Same objection with regard to  
11 topic 1.

12 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

13 Q. You still have to answer, Ms. Betts.

14 A. No.

15 Q. Okay. Of the families that were -- that were  
16 rejected by Miracle Hill prospective foster parents  
17 because of their religious beliefs or sexual  
18 orientation, did those families go on to approach  
19 other CPAs?

20 A. So tell me your understanding -- or what  
21 you're asking -- rejected those words that were in that  
22 middle of that question.

23 Q. So we were just asking about and we were  
24 talking about families that Miracle Hill has rejected  
25 or turned away because of their faith or lack thereof

1 or because they are in a same-sex relationship?

2 A. They were directed elsewhere.

3 Q. Right. Did Miracle Hill know whether any of  
4 those families or individuals went on to actually  
5 approach another CPA?

6 A. No. I don't know how we would know that.

7 Q. Does Miracle Hill follow up or track what  
8 happened to these parents in any way?

9 A. No, not usually.

10 Q. And when you say "not usually," what do you  
11 mean by that?

12 A. Once we -- once we let them know and give them  
13 a list or other child listing agencies to pursue  
14 licensure with, we do not follow up with those  
15 families.

16 Q. Has any other CPA contacted Miracle Hill  
17 about families that Miracle Hill had turned away or  
18 refused to work with?

19 A. Are you asking that from me personally or are  
20 you asking that on behalf of Miracle Hill?

21 Q. On behalf of Miracle Hill.

22 A. None that we're aware of.

23 (Exhibit 12 marked for identification.)

24 Q. Let's mark Tab 22 which is 12850. This is  
25 Exhibit 12.

1 A. That number again, please.

2 Q. It's 12850. This is Exhibit 12. Do you have  
3 the document in front of you?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. Okay. This is Exhibit 12. It's  
6 MIRACLE\_HILL\_SUBP\_012850 to 51. And this is an  
7 e-mail, the top e-mail is from Brenda Parks to Reid  
8 Lehman and Ken Kruithof copying you and Jason Mowen,  
9 and the subject is foster parent inquiry, the  
10 importance is marked high. Do you recognize this  
11 e-mail?

12 A. Yes.

13 Q. And do you -- and then the e-mail below is an  
14 e-mail from you to a redacted individual or  
15 individuals; is that right?

16 A. Correct.

17 Q. Did you send and receive these e-mails in the  
18 ordinary course of your work at Miracle Hill?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And in the e-mail at the top, Ms. Parks  
21 explain that Miracle Hill received an inquiry from a  
22 same-sex couple for the foster parent program. And  
23 she says that you did a Facebook check for the couple  
24 and was able to find one of them; is that right?

25 A. Yes.

1           A. To let her know what I had already -- what I  
2 already was asking for and what was my response going  
3 to be.

4           Q. When you say "what was my response going to  
5 be," you mean what would your response be going  
6 forward if the couple sent their testimony and their  
7 church denomination?

8           A. Well, she includes in her e-mail "if they do  
9 respond, we will need to discuss how you would have us  
10 to reply."

11          Q. And did that discussion take place?

12          A. Not that I recall.

13          Q. Do you recall what happened with this  
14 inquiry?

15          A. My recollection, they did not respond.

16          Q. So I do think I need to go back and make sure  
17 I understand. Why did you send this inquiry to  
18 Ms. Parks?

19          A. This is an e-mail. This is not the actual  
20 inquiry. The actual inquiry is not attached here  
21 because, as I said, she has privy to that just like I  
22 do. I sent this -- yeah.

23          Q. Why did you send this e-mail to Ms. Parks?

24          A. I wanted her to be able to see what I was  
25 asking for and what was missing in the inquiry if she

1 had not noticed it missing.

2 Q. But you wouldn't have sent this -- we are  
3 going a little bit in circles. You've testified that  
4 you would not have sent this to Ms. Parks if this had  
5 come from a couple that was not same sex.

6 A. Okay.

7 Q. I understand --

8 A. I think I also testified that it was because  
9 we believed that to have the same -- that their names  
10 led us to believe that they were two women.

11 Q. So --

12 A. I think I've answered that a couple of times.

13 Q. So I suppose my question is: Do you feel  
14 that -- were you asking whether Miracle Hill would be  
15 able to accept these -- this couple if they were same  
16 sex regardless of what they sent you if they sent a  
17 testimony and a -- and a church denomination that  
18 otherwise satisfied Miracle Hill's requirements?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. Thank you. And would Miracle Hill have been  
21 willing to work with those women if they sent a  
22 testimony and church denomination that otherwise  
23 satisfied Miracle Hill's requirements?

24 MR. COLEMAN: Object to the form. Clarify,  
25 are you asking individually or what capacity you're

1 asking that?

2 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

3 Q. You can answer the question.

4 MR. COLEMAN: Sorry, my objection may not have  
5 been clear. Are you asking her in her individual  
6 capacity or in her 30(b)(6) designee capacity?

7 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

8 Q. I'm asking you if you think Miracle Hill --  
9 if you understand whether Miracle Hill would have been  
10 willing to work with those women if they had otherwise  
11 sent a church denomination and a testimony that  
12 satisfied Miracle Hill's requirements?

13 A. I would say no.

14 (Exhibit 13 marked for identification.)

15 Q. All right. Let's mark Tab 66 and this is  
16 6977. Do you have the document?

17 A. Yes.

18 Q. This is an undated note that is signed by you  
19 which appears to be a summary of a conversation that  
20 you had with Brandy Welch on April 11, 2019. It's  
21 Bates stamped MIRACLE\_HILL\_SUBP\_006977 and it is  
22 Exhibit 13. Have you seen this document before?

23 A. Yes.

24 Q. Did I describe it accurately?

25 A. Yes.

1 Q. Did you draft and sign this note?

2 A. I did.

3 Q. When did you draft and sign this note?

4 A. I do not have a date written on it. I'm going  
5 to approximate it either April 11 or April 12 of 2019.

6 Q. And why did you sign it?

7 A. Because I used the word "I" throughout the  
8 document and I wanted it to be known who was writing  
9 it. And we sign -- we sign all documents typically in  
10 the course of our work.

11 Q. Do you -- why did you draft this note?

12 A. I drafted this note to help me recall my  
13 conversation with Ms. Welch if she did complete an  
14 inquiry.

15 Q. And is that your typical --

16 A. No.

17 Q. So why did you do it in this instance?

18 A. I felt the type of questions that she was  
19 asking me were not our typical questions that we get  
20 from prospective foster parents who are interested in  
21 working with Miracle Hill. When I get -- reiterated to  
22 her that Miracle Hill was a Christian ministry and we  
23 viewed our work as a religious exercise and want those  
24 who work with us to share our mission, motivation, and  
25 beliefs, she continued to ask kind of the same question



1 over again. And, again, I felt there was much more --  
2 perhaps something behind what she was asking, and I  
3 just wanted to have something to go back to if she did  
4 inquire.

5 Q. So in the call Ms. Welch expressed her  
6 family's interest in serving as a foster care family;  
7 is that right?

8 A. That was -- that was stated in a voicemail  
9 message that I was then forwarded from a receptionist.

10 Q. And she stated that she -- so in the  
11 voicemail she stated that she was interested in foster  
12 care and then you called her; is that right?

13 A. Yes.

14 Q. And did she reiterate that point during the  
15 phone call?

16 A. She said that she and her family were  
17 interested in foster care.

18 Q. And she said that she has a wife and she  
19 asked if she would be disqualified based on your  
20 website; is that right?

21 A. She said she had a wife and then she asked a  
22 question, did our website indicate what type of  
23 families we work with.

24 Q. So -- right. And so -- and then she asked if  
25 she would be disqualified; is that right?

1 Miracle Hill staff as far up in the chain of command as  
2 Reid Lehman.

3 Q. And what were those conversations?

4 A. I do not recall other than just a discussion  
5 of what a Universalist -- Unitarian Universalist Church  
6 would believe and whether it was considered a Christian  
7 church.

8 Q. So Miracle Hill's rejection of Ms. Welch and  
9 Ms. Rogers is squarely within topic 9 of the  
10 designated topics. So I do need to understand Miracle  
11 Hill's basis for this letter and this communication.

12 So why did Miracle Hill tell Ms. Rogers and  
13 Ms. Welch that the Unitarian Universalist Church is  
14 not considered a Christian church?

15 A. Because the Unitarian Universalist Church  
16 would not claim to be a Christian church.

17 Q. And --

18 A. Their doctrine would not -- their doctrine  
19 would not align with our doctrine.

20 Q. How did Miracle Hill come to that conclusion?

21 A. I do not know.

22 Q. You are the person designated most  
23 knowledgeable on this topic; is that right?

24 A. Yes. I also believe Reid Lehman spoke on  
25 Thursday to point number 1 in the deposition about that

1 specific --

2 Q. No. This is not -- this is not topic number  
3 1. This is topic number 9.

4 A. Okay.

5 Q. So how did Miracle Hill come to the  
6 conclusion that the Universalist Unitarian -- or the  
7 Unitarian Universalist Church is not a Christian  
8 church?

9 A. I'm going to say either personal knowledge  
10 and/or research by looking it up as to what their  
11 doctrinal statement would include.

12 Q. If an applicant went to a Methodist church  
13 and the spiritual leader of that church performed  
14 same-sex marriages, would you reject the application  
15 of a member of that church even if the member agreed  
16 with the doctrinal statement?

17 A. If they are active in a Christian church, if  
18 they are -- can adhere to the doctrinal statement in  
19 faith and practice and if they can give a personal  
20 testimony that they're following Christ, they could be  
21 considered.

22 Q. Even if the spiritual leader of that church  
23 engaged in practices that would not adhere to the  
24 doctrinal statement?

25 MR. MATTHEWS: Object to the form.

1 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

2 Q. You can still answer the question.

3 A. Okay.

4 MR. MATTHEWS: Yeah, I'm sorry.

5 THE WITNESS: Yes.

6 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

7 Q. So why then if Ms. Rogers and Ms. Welch told  
8 Miracle Hill that they adhered to the doctrinal  
9 statement did it matter that they went to a church  
10 that might not in all forms align with the doctrinal  
11 statement?

12 A. No. As it's stated in this letter is that the  
13 Unitarian Universalist Church is not considered a  
14 Christian church.

15 Q. So if Ms. Rogers and Ms. Welch attended a  
16 different church, say a Methodist church and agreed  
17 with doctrinal statement and everything else about  
18 their application was the same, would Miracle Hill  
19 have accepted their application?

20 MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to the  
21 form of the question.

22 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

23 Q. You can still answer.

24 A. No, I do not believe they would.

25 Q. Why is that?

1           A. Because they are in a practicing -- that would  
2 not agree with our doctrinal -- in a practice that  
3 would not agree with our doctrinal statement.

4           Q. And what practice is that?

5           A. That they are a same-sex married couple.

6           Q. Did you note to Ms. Welch and Ms. Rogers when  
7 rejecting their foster application that their --  
8 excuse me.

9                   Did the note to Ms. Welch and Ms. Rogers  
10 rejecting their foster application cite the fact that  
11 they're a same-sex couple as an additional reason for  
12 their rejection?

13          A. No.

14          Q. Why not?

15          A. Based --

16               MR. MATTHEWS: To the extent it involves  
17 privileged communication, I'll object. To the extent  
18 it doesn't, feel free to answer.

19               BY MS. SCHINDEL:

20          Q. Go ahead.

21          A. Based on conversations and understanding from  
22 legal counsel, I cannot --

23               MR. COLEMAN: Objection.

24               MR. MATTHEWS: Object. If that's where the  
25 answer is going, I'll object and assert privilege and

1 direct her not the answer.

2 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

3 Q. So let me ask this -- and feel free to pause  
4 to the extent your counsel has any objection -- do you  
5 have any understanding as to why -- does Miracle Hill  
6 -- I'm asking you as a representative for Miracle  
7 Hill. Does Miracle Hill have any understanding as to  
8 why Ms. Welch and Ms. Rogers rejection letter, the  
9 letter to them rejecting their foster application does  
10 not cite the fact that they are same-sex couple as an  
11 additional reason for their rejection other than  
12 communications with legal counsel?

13 MR. MATTHEWS: Just to make sure I understand.  
14 You're asking if --

15 MS. SCHINDEL: I'm asking does Miracle Hill --

16 MR. MATTHEWS: -- of any reason why same-sex  
17 couple was not included in the letter for any reason  
18 other than communications that involved legal counsel;  
19 is that correct?

20 MS. SCHINDEL: Not quite.

21 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

22 Q. Does -- the question is: Does Miracle Hill  
23 have any knowledge as to why or have any -- yes. Does  
24 Miracle Hill have any knowledge as to why Ms. Welch  
25 and Ms. Rogers, the rejection letter did not cite the

1 fact that they were a same-sex couple as an additional  
2 reason for the rejection that is based on anything  
3 other than communications with legal counsel?

4 MR. MATTHEWS: To the extent that you  
5 clarified it that way, excluding any discussions,  
6 whatever, with legal counsel, if there is any other  
7 understanding, you're free to conditions answer the  
8 question. But, again, if it involved the discussions  
9 with legal counsel, then you're not.

10 THE WITNESS: No, we're not aware.

11 MS. SCHINDEL: So I realize it's a little  
12 after 1:00. I'm happy to take a lunch break if that  
13 would be amenable to others or we're happy to keep  
14 going.

15 MR. MATTHEWS: Probably now is a good time.

16 THE WITNESS: Now is a good time.

17 MS. SCHINDEL: I believe last time we did  
18 45 minutes. Is that still a good time?

19 MR. MATTHEWS: Yesterday we found out so we  
20 don't underestimate it --

21 (Off-the-record discussion.)

22 MR. MATTHEWS: Is an hour okay?

23 MS. SCHINDEL: That's perfectly fine. We'll  
24 see you back at 2:05.

25 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: Off the record at 1:05.

1 (Recess taken from 1:05 p.m. until 2:16 p.m.)

2 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: On the record at 2:16.

3 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

4 Q. Ms. Betts, does Miracle Hill assign mentors  
5 to work with foster children?

6 A. No.

7 Q. Does Miracle Hill work with mentors?

8 A. We no longer work with mentors. We have in  
9 the past.

10 Q. When did Miracle Hill stop working with  
11 mentors?

12 A. December of 2020.

13 Q. And were those -- I'm just adjusting my  
14 camera so it's not just my forehead.

15 A. That's helpful. Thank you.

16 Q. Were those -- were those mentors working with  
17 foster children or just within Miracle Hill's group  
18 homes?

19 A. I am unaware of any foster children that they  
20 were working with. Mostly it was group home related.

21 Q. Got it. And is it your understanding that  
22 Miracle Hill will work now with -- well, let me phrase  
23 this. Was it your understanding at some point Miracle  
24 Hill determined that it would be willing to work with  
25 Catholic individuals who wanted to serve as mentors or



1 prospective foster parents if those individuals were  
2 willing to serve -- willing to sign the doctrinal  
3 statement?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And is it your understanding that the  
6 doctrinal statement sets out Evangelical beliefs?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Do you -- do you think that all Catholics  
9 would be able to sign the doctrinal statement?

10 A. I do not know.

11 Q. Do you -- do you think that some people  
12 adhering to Catholic faith would be unable to sign the  
13 doctrinal statement?

14 MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to the  
15 form of the question.

16 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

17 Q. You can still answer.

18 A. I do not know that answer either.

19 Q. Has Miracle Hill always been willing to work  
20 with Catholic individuals as prospective foster  
21 parents?

22 A. No.

23 Q. Do you know when the policy changed?

24 A. May of 2019.

25 Q. Are you familiar with a lawsuit brought

1 orientation but never completed an application. We  
2 have received one application from a Catholic couple  
3 from Heartfelt Calling, but they have not -- again,  
4 they have not registered for an orientation.

5 Q. Okay. So, unfortunately, for some reason --  
6 it must be the servers because exhibit share  
7 completely isn't working. So I'm going to again  
8 screen share the document that you have in front of  
9 you. So give me one moment. So this is -- this is  
10 Exhibit 23 and it's Bates stamped  
11 MIRACLE\_HILL\_SUBP\_004958 to 962. And it is a -- it  
12 appears to be an inquiry form that Miracle Hill  
13 received from applicant which you then forwarded to  
14 Brenda Parks, and she responded to your e-mail. Is  
15 that all right?

16 A. Yes.

17 Q. Do you recognize this document?

18 A. I've seen it.

19 Q. And were your e-mails and inquiry sent and  
20 received in the normal course of your business at  
21 Miracle Hill?

22 A. It was.

23 Q. So this inquiry is from an applicant that  
24 indicated that she attended Catholic church; is that  
25 right. I'm looking particular at the page ending in

1 4960.

2 A. Yes.

3 Q. So why did you forward this inquiry to Brenda  
4 Parks?

5 A. I do not recall.

6 Q. Did you send -- this is from February 26,  
7 2020. At this point Miracle Hill was working with  
8 had -- was willing to work with Catholic applicants  
9 provided they met all of Miracle Hill's other  
10 requirements; is that right?

11 A. Yes, that they could sign the doctrinal  
12 statement in belief and practice and be a follower of  
13 Jesus.

14 Q. At this point were you sending all  
15 applications from Catholic families to Ms. Parks?

16 A. This was an inquiry. And I do not recall how  
17 many inquiries would have come from the time that  
18 policy was changed in May of 2019 up until this date of  
19 2/26/2020.

20 Q. So let me try re-asking that you're right, it  
21 is an inquiry. At this point, to your knowledge, were  
22 you forwarding all inquiries from Catholic applicants  
23 or Catholic individuals who indicated they were  
24 interested in fostering with Miracle Hill, were you  
25 forwarding all such inquiries to Ms. Parks?

1 A. I do not recall.

2 Q. Do you have -- I'm going to stop sharing if  
3 that's okay. Do you have any reason to believe that  
4 there were inquiries you received from Catholic  
5 families that you did not forward to Ms. Parks?

6 A. Perhaps.

7 Q. Okay. So when there is a prospective foster  
8 parent with whom Miracle Hill will not work because of  
9 that individual's religious beliefs or sexual  
10 orientation, did Miracle Hill refer that prospective  
11 foster family or parent to another CPA?

12 A. Again, we would look at whether the person was  
13 attending a Christian church, whether they could sign  
14 the doctrinal statement and -- in faith and practice,  
15 and that they were a follower of Jesus. If one of  
16 those three were not there, not yes answers, then we  
17 would refer them to another CPA.

18 Q. And just to be clear, when you say whether  
19 they could sign the doctrinal statement in faith and  
20 in practice, that's based in part on Miracle Hill's  
21 assessment on whether they would be able to sign the  
22 doctrinal statement in faith and in practice, right,  
23 not just whether they assert that they are able to  
24 sign the doctrinal statement in faith and in practice;  
25 is that right?

1           A. Again, asking those four questions that are  
2 asked of all applicants.

3           Q. And based on Miracle Hill's assessment,  
4 following those four questions, if Miracle Hill  
5 determines that it's unwilling to work or unable to  
6 work with any given individual because of that  
7 individual's religious beliefs or sexual orientation,  
8 Miracle Hill would then refer those individuals along  
9 to other CPAs; is that right?

10          A. Because of their religious beliefs, yes, we  
11 would refer them to other CPAs.

12          Q. Well, just -- so it's not necessarily because  
13 of their religious beliefs, it's because their  
14 practices may not align with Miracle Hill's doctrinal  
15 statement; right?

16          A. Correct.

17          Q. So -- okay. And did Miracle Hill always send  
18 the individuals to the same -- refer the individuals  
19 to the same set of CPAs or did it vary depending on  
20 the family with whom you're engaging?

21          A. It probably varies on when I'm answering the  
22 e-mail. I often give them a large variety and  
23 sometimes, as you've noticed in some of the e-mails, I  
24 might give them one or two or I may refer them straight  
25 to Heartfelt Calling which has basically all of the

1 CPAs and has knowledge of what one's -- they might be  
2 willing to or interested in finding out more  
3 information about.

4 Q. And is it -- are there specific factors that  
5 you consider when deciding which CPAs to recommend to  
6 any given foster parent or prospective foster parent?

7 A. I don't think that I -- necessarily that  
8 that's true.

9 Q. Okay. Let's go back to -- let me figure out  
10 what exhibit it is. Hold on. It's Exhibit 16 and  
11 this is the document 592.

12 A. Yes, I have it.

13 Q. Okay. And we established earlier that this  
14 is the note you sent to Ms. Rogers and Ms. Welch  
15 explaining that Miracle Hill could not work with them  
16 as foster parents; is that right?

17 A. This is where I referred to other agencies.

18 Q. And rejected their application to work with  
19 Miracle Hill; is that right?

20 MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to the  
21 form of the question. Go ahead.

22 THE WITNESS: They never did apply to be a  
23 foster parent.

24 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

25 Q. This is the e-mail where you explained that

1 that, in fact, Epworth would not work with LGBTQ  
2 individuals or non-Christians?

3 A. No.

4 Q. Let's take a look at Tab 49 and this is --  
5 MIRACLE\_HILL -- for you to find it, 3561.

6 A. I have the document.

7 Q. I'm still waiting for it. This is -- all  
8 right. I will again have to do screen share. So this  
9 is going to be Exhibit 25 and let me pull it up.

10 (Exhibit 25 marked for identification.)

11 Q. And this is an e-mail chain with the Bates  
12 stamp MIRACLE\_HILL\_SUBP\_003561 to 63. Have you seen  
13 those e-mails before?

14 A. Yes.

15 Q. And the first e-mail is on -- is actually the  
16 second on the page. And it's an e-mail from Reid  
17 Lehman to Beth Williams who's now at Epworth; is that  
18 right?

19 A. Yes.

20 Q. And he says, "Michael Leach will be coming to  
21 tour portions of MHM next Tuesday. He continues to  
22 believe that Miracle Hill is the only agency that  
23 needs the waiver given by HHS last winter. Would you  
24 be willing for me to tell him about Epworth and your  
25 denomination's expectation that you'll recruit

1 heterosexual couples? I'm not suggesting that we tell  
2 the media, but I'm like to tell Mr. Leach." Is that  
3 right?

4 A. It's what the sentence -- or the paragraph  
5 says.

6 Q. And does this not indicate that Epworth --  
7 that Mr. Lehman understood that Epworth would not --  
8 would only recruit heterosexual couples?

9 A. I did not discuss that specifically with him.

10 Q. Do you have any reason to believe that  
11 Epworth will not work with same-sex couples?

12 A. Again, are you talking personally or are you  
13 talking --

14 Q. You personally, do you have any reason to  
15 believe that Epworth will not work with same-sex  
16 couples?

17 A. No, I do not.

18 Q. I see. So -- and Mr. Lehman, he relayed this  
19 conversation to you as the Miracle Hill  
20 representative?

21 A. As Miracle Hill representative, he discussed  
22 or talked with me that he had indeed had communication  
23 with Beth Williams, but the specifics as what you just  
24 read, I didn't have knowledge of.

25 Q. But you testified that you've seen this



1 e-mail before; right?

2 A. I have seen this e-mail, yes, in scanning it  
3 in preparation for today's deposition.

4 Q. So I'm trying to understand Miracle Hill's  
5 testimony that it has no reason to believe that  
6 Epworth will recruit only heterosexual couples. Could  
7 you please explain the basis for that testimony?

8 A. One more time that question, please.

9 Q. What is the basis for your testimony as a  
10 representative of Miracle Hill that Miracle Hill has  
11 no understanding or no reason to believe that Epworth  
12 will only recruit heterosexual couples?

13 A. I'm still confused on the question.

14 Q. Did Miracle Hill have any reason to believe  
15 that Epworth will only work with heterosexual couples?

16 MR. MATTHEWS: Object to the form of the  
17 question.

18 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

19 Q. You can still answer.

20 A. I'm going to go on the basis of what's in this  
21 e-mail that just says that you will -- or that you'll  
22 recruit heterosexual couples.

23 Q. Ms. Betts, you were designated as the  
24 representative on communications with other South  
25 Carolina CPAs regarding their policies or practices of

1 not accepting prospective foster families because of  
2 their religion, same-sex relationship, or LGBTQ  
3 status; is that right?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And you were tasked with being the person  
6 most knowledgeable about Miracle Hill's understanding  
7 of these communications.

8 A. Okay.

9 Q. So as a designee for Miracle Hill, does  
10 Miracle Hill have any reason to believe that Epworth  
11 will not recruit -- will only recruit heterosexual  
12 couples?

13 A. I'm sorry, the last part of that question  
14 threw me off.

15 Q. Does Miracle Hill have reason to believe that  
16 Epworth will recruit only heterosexual couples?

17 A. According to this e-mail, they will only  
18 recruit heterosexual couples.

19 Q. Are you aware of any other communications --  
20 and as a designee of Miracle Hill, is Miracle Hill  
21 aware of any other communications with other South  
22 Carolina CPAs regarding their policies or practices of  
23 not accepting prospective foster families because of  
24 their religion, same-sex relationship or LGBTQ status?

25 A. Yes. Mr. Lehman had e-mails with Southeastern

1 Children's Home.

2 Q. And does Miracle Hill understand that  
3 Southeastern Children's Home will not accept  
4 prospective foster families because of their religion,  
5 same-sex relationship, or LGBTQ status?

6 A. Yes.

7 Q. Are there any other communications of which  
8 you're aware?

9 A. Brenda Parks -- Brenda Parks told me of  
10 conversations that she had with some, but none of which  
11 would give one -- one way or another they would not  
12 speak for their agency.

13 Q. And which agencies were that -- was that --  
14 which agencies are you speaking of when you say that  
15 she had conversations with some?

16 A. Connie Maxwell was one that she mentioned to  
17 me.

18 Q. Any others?

19 A. Not -- Thornwell, but they would not -- they  
20 would not state one way or another for their agency.

21 Q. Okay. Earlier in this deposition you  
22 mentioned that in the initial home study a Miracle  
23 Hill licensing specialist would ask prospective  
24 parents about the church that the family attends; is  
25 that right?

1 A. Yes.

2 Q. And you would ask whether they take the kids  
3 there; is that right?

4 A. Yes.

5 Q. And how involved the kids are -- to the  
6 extent that they have children in their home how  
7 involved those children are in the church; is that  
8 right?

9 A. Correct.

10 Q. And I asked why Miracle Hill would ask those  
11 questions, and you said we would want the family to be  
12 attending church together and we would want to see  
13 what they're teaching their children. Do you recall  
14 that?

15 A. Yes.

16 Q. Now, as a representative for Miracle Hill on  
17 topic 11, why does Miracle Hill want the family to be  
18 attending church together?

19 A. To show a cohesiveness in a family unit just  
20 as if a family member was involved in a opera, a sports  
21 team, dance lessons, things like that, we would want  
22 them to -- to be a stable family that would be able to  
23 provide for foster children and to show a stable secure  
24 family setting.

25 Q. And when you say that it is just -- to show

1 cohesiveness in a family just like going to sports  
2 team and dance lessons, is there nothing unique about  
3 going to church and what that represents to Miracle  
4 Hill?

5 A. Yes, it is important, and it is part of our  
6 requirements for partnering with us in becoming a  
7 foster parent. So, yes, it would be important.

8 Q. Why does it matter whether the children are  
9 taken to church?

10 MR. COLEMAN: This is Miles. Object to the  
11 form of the question.

12 BY MS. SCHINDEL:

13 Q. You can answer.

14 A. The question one more time.

15 Q. Why does it matter to Miracle Hill in its  
16 initial home study whether prospective foster family's  
17 biological children are attending church with the  
18 parents?

19 A. To show the foster family's, again,  
20 cooperation together, family life, and what their  
21 teaching and expectations for their children would be.

22 Q. And when you say teaching and expectations  
23 for children, do you mean religious teaching?

24 A. Yes, as part of that. Uh-huh.

25 Q. Does it matter to Miracle Hill as part of its